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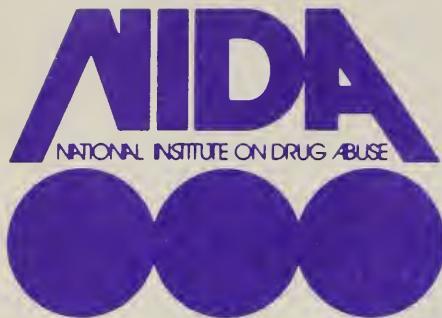
Research

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6

**EFFECTS
OF LABELING
THE "DRUG-ABUSER"**

AN INQUIRY



The NIDA Research Monograph series is prepared by the Research Division of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Its primary objective is to provide critical reviews of research problems and techniques, the content of state-of-the-art conferences, integrative research reviews and significant original research. Its dual publication emphasis is rapid and targeted dissemination to the scientific and professional community.

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EFFECTS OF LABELING THE "DRUG-ABUSER": AN INQUIRY

by

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March 1976

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FOREWORD

When this monograph was originally conceived (1973), Institute scientists and others interested in the problem of drugs were very much concerned about the impact of being arrested or otherwise identified as a "drug abuser" on the self concept and subsequent behavior of those adolescents so labeled. Although there was little data to provide convincing empirical support for our impressions, it seemed reasonable to assume that such labeling might have serious implications. In estranging the labeled individual from his peers and creating a climate of expectation both in himself and in others, this process of being labeled a drug user seemed likely to encourage further a profound sense of social alienation and a still greater tendency to use drugs. Because of the potential importance of this issue in developing a more rational approach to illicit drug use, the Institute commissioned the Research Triangle Institute to study the feasibility of a study in this area.

One outcome of that work was the decision not to attempt a larger scale study of labeling. It became clear that both the drug-use picture and society's response to it were changing far too rapidly to mount a longitudinal study of the type originally considered. While personal possession of marihuana was originally a felony in many states, there has been an increasing tendency to make it a misdemeanor or not to prosecute individuals found possessing small quantities. Indeed as of this date (February, 1976), six states have elected to decriminalize completely personal possession of small amounts of cannabis. Moreover, what was once statistically deviant behavior has now become the statistical norm (53% of the 18-25 age group had used marihuana one or more times by 1975) still further altering the way in which drug using behavior is viewed both by users themselves and by others in the community.

Although the study originally contemplated no longer appears to be feasible, the thinking that went into reviewing the problem is of continuing interest. We believe the excellent review done by Dr. Williams deserves a larger audience and will be valuable to many interested in the possible impact of labeling on adolescents and on the development of a more rational approach to drug abuse in American society.

Robert C. Petersen, Ph.D.

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1 Introduction

This monograph is the outgrowth of a paper prepared late in 1973 under contract with the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The purpose of the contract was to determine the feasibility of studying the effects of arrest as a drug law violator (or identification as a drug abuser¹) on adolescent psychological development.

The effect of drug laws and possible changes in those laws is much debated and it was felt that assembling and reviewing what is known could enlighten those discussions. It was recognized that there has been much speculation about the effect of arrest, and identification of an adolescent as an "addict" or "drug-abuser," on his self-image and subsequent behavior. These concerns fall within a framework called labeling theory, which has

1 Various terms other than "drug abuse" have appeared in the literature resulting in a thorny and unresolved definitional issue. The term "drug abuse" will be used here to refer to non-medical and/or non-legal drug use. Any deviation from this terminology should be clear to the reader from its use in the text. For a discussion of various current definitions used in drug research see, Elinson, Jack and David Nurco (eds.). Operational Definitions in Socio-behavioral Drug Use Research 1975. Rockville, Maryland: National Institute on Drug Abuse, October 1975. For a specific discussion of the terms "addiction," "dependency," "abuse," or "use," see, Smart, Reginald G., "Addiction, dependency, abuse or use: Which are we studying with epidemiology?" In Josephson, Eric and Eleanor E. Carroll (eds.). Drug Use: Epidemiological and Sociological Approaches. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974, 23-42.

not been tested with adolescents involved in violations of drug laws. It was recognized, however, that the problems of studying the phenomena of labeling, self-concept, and adolescent identity in the framework of actual society are great. The situations in which such work could be done might be few in number. There was a need to examine the possibilities for research on this subject and make recommendations for realistic projects. So an analysis of the existing literature and a research feasibility study were undertaken.

The timing of NIDA's interest in these issues coincided with the published reports of the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse. One concern of the National Commission was with the extent to which adolescents apprehended for drug abuse were "criminalized." Presumably the bulk of these youths, particularly marihuana users, were not involved in other areas of criminal activity prior to their official apprehension for drug abuse. Speculation centered on whether subsequent to such apprehension there is a high probability that being identified as a "criminal" reduces the adolescent's life chances for success and, in other ways, leads him or her into a life of crime.

At that moment, particularly with the publicity received by the National Commission, public and official attention was focused on the adolescent "drug crisis" in America. Although enforcement responses varied from place to place, official crime statistics showed increasing arrests of adolescents for drug law violations. A pressing question then was, what were the social and psychological costs of enforcing existing drug laws? If the labeling effects of official apprehension had such dire consequences for the psychological

and social development of the young drug user, what implications did this have for decriminalizing the drug laws?

The policy implications for the research NIDA was proposing were extensive and important. However, NIDA, recognizing the complexity of the research question, opted for a research feasibility study.

The first step in determining the feasibility of studying these issues then was to review the literature. This monograph is based on that literature review. It reviews what is known about these issues, theoretically and empirically. It also explores some interesting aspects of labeling that are beginning to be recognized more clearly, that is, the positive functions of labeling and the various ways in which labeling may be effectively resisted. In addition, in the drug area, the study of the labeling process is intriguing because of the varying societal views on the use or abuse of various drugs. The drug laws and the differential enforcement of those laws (that is, the exercise of police discretion) along with differing public views about the use or abuse of various drugs produces a complex pattern bearing directly on the varying extent of labeling for the adolescents apprehended. Since the writing of the paper (1973), the bibliography has been brought up to date (as of Sept., 1975). The references added since 1973 do not alter the monograph content in any significant way. What has been added since that time essentially repeats and reemphasizes the major points discussed in the monograph.

For the reader who is interested in the outcome of the research feasibility study: it was recommended that the *ideal* research design would be longitudinal. However, a longitudinal study would be very expensive and produce a low yield from the target sample of adolescents who might subsequently be apprehended for a drug law violation (despite increasing apprehension in recent years, the proportion of all adolescents apprehended for drug law violations is very small). For this and other reasons the longitudinal approach was determined not to be feasible. It was recommended that a small number of in-depth case studies might provide some valuable information. Another possible approach recommended was to identify sub-issues from the larger longitudinal approach and to mount smaller scale, limited studies to resolve these parts of the overall problem in a piecemeal fashion. Hopefully, this monograph will identify serviceable research areas and stimulate investigators to come to grips with these issues and, if possible, solve them.

The most timely and reasonable perspective to utilize in exploring the impact of apprehension

and identification as a drug law violator on the adolescent's psychological development is the labeling perspective. The labeling perspective states that societal reaction, official or unofficial, to behavior which is defined as unlawful or deviant may have an impact on the self-concept and subsequent behavior of the person labeled. While the labeling perspective provided a framework in which to work, it did not provide specific empirical guidelines to the mechanisms operative in the situation of the youthful drug law violator.

In addition to the labeling perspective, the related idea of self-concept² development and the empirical fact of varying attitudes towards different drugs had to be considered. The following questions show how these considerations intertwined.

What are the antecedent conditions of adolescent self-concept that may lead to drug abuse?

Does drug abuse itself alter self-concept and if so, how?

Do the above two points vary by drug of choice and if so, how?

Do specific drug laws and modes of official enforcement have differential impacts by drug of choice and thereby on how one may respond to apprehension?

Does labeling really occur? If so: How does it operate on the self-concept? How does it operate in general? How does it "take" and under what conditions? How can it be resisted and under what conditions?

How do all of the above points interact?

² *Self-concept and self-image are considered equivalent terms in this paper. While there is some confusion in the literature about the meaning of these terms (see Wylie, 1961), self-concept or self-image may be considered the broad term covering the dimensions of self-esteem and self-perception (Wylie, 1961; Rosenberg, 1965; Coopersmith, 1967). Due to the vagaries of some literature and the need to develop a general picture from this literature, the distinctions noted here will be largely ignored. When possible, however, reports on self-esteem or self-perception will be noted but will be treated as an indicator of the more general concept category.*

While these and other questions were not necessarily resolved, they did point to the complexity of the problem. Three primary complications emerged.

In order to evaluate shifts in the adolescent's self-concept as the result of being labeled, one should have a measure of the self-concept prior to official apprehension. These determinations are made more complex by the possibility that drug use itself may impact on the self-concept in ways that significantly alter any self-concept change responses to the labeling process. Further, the development of self-concept, particularly in adolescence, is a highly dynamic process, which means that any changes noted from repeated measurements may be attributed to a variety of influences.

Another complication is the varying attitudes towards the *type* of drug the adolescent uses. Although tobacco and alcohol are drugs, their use, even by adolescents, is viewed in the public and official minds as very different from the use of marihuana, LSD or heroin. In turn, the use of marihuana, in the current public and official view, seems far less heinous than the use of LSD or heroin. Use of different drugs evokes different degrees of public or official reaction. Presumably, labeling effects would be more marked if the enforcing agency view towards a drug required that the adolescent be apprehended *and* processed through the criminal justice system. On the other hand, the social attitudes surrounding the adolescent's drug(s) of choice may often serve to insulate him or her against any damaging effects of the labeling process.

The third major complication is perhaps the most crucial. Does the labeling phenomenon occur in the real world? Despite the compelling theoretical reasons for hypothesizing the labeling effect, there is little empirical evidence that demonstrates the labeling mechanism and its operation. Further, the more researchers and theorists delve into the labeling perspective, the more they unearth addi-

tional complexities associated with the operation of the labeling process. Labeling has typically been associated with the ascription of a negative status to a person as a result of "societal reaction" to some real or imagined deviant activity. But, the general process of socialization or social learning also allows for the ascription of status to a person through "societal reaction" to real or imagined activity, both positive and negative. More and more the labeling perspective looks less and less unique and specific, but rather, appears to be a particular application of a larger theoretical view of social developmental processes. This is not to deny the importance of the labeling perspective. Indeed, if labeling a person for a deviant act has implications for that person's further deviancy, we need to be aware of this process in order to implement social policy that will minimize the negative consequences of such labeling.

This paper explores what is known about the effect of arrest and official identification of the adolescent "drug abuser" or "addict" on his or her self-image and subsequent behavior. In searching the literature, this writer was unable to find any empirical work that dealt directly with the problem as stated above. However, there is a substantial literature that addresses various parts of the problem. In particular, the perspective of labeling deals specifically with the impact of societal reaction to deviance on the person designated "deviant." This approach, due to its theoretical importance and relevance to the issue of drug abuse, will be discussed in detail. In addition, other broad areas reflected in the bibliography are self-concept, effects of official apprehension, juvenile delinquency, symbolic interactionism, adolescent behavior. This literature will be discussed in terms of how these major areas individually or in combination contribute to understanding the problem. The various threads of theoretical and empirical works will hopefully produce a meaningful woven cloth of understanding.

2 Drug Abuse as a Crime

Drug abuse provides some interesting insights into how our society defines certain behaviors and formalizes certain norms or rules into laws. Drug abuse, unlike homicide, assault, robbery, or burglary may be classified as a "victimless" crime (Schur, 1965). The crime without a victim refers to an illegal act in which the participating parties consent to be involved. Homosexuality, prostitution, gambling, and drug abuse are examples of this type of crime. These "crimes" are borderline offenses in that substantial segments of the population often do not view such behavior as criminal. Where certain laws are seen as intruding on private matters, there may be a wholesale "patterned evasion" (Williams, 1960) of the particular law, as is the case currently with much sexual behavior and the use of certain drugs. These offenses are made additionally borderline by the lack of a complaining victim thereby causing enforcement to be nearly impossible. The difficulties of enforcement produce low apprehension rates, most of which are accomplished by entrapment techniques used by the enforcement agencies. The entrapment techniques raise questions about the legality of official behavior as well as whether it is "fair" or worth the trouble. The low apprehension rates spawn a sense of injustice in persons caught since most other "offenders" are "getting away with it." This heightens the feeling that "the only crime is getting caught" and thereby potentially generates disrespect for laws in general. Even officials respond to crimes without victims in inconsistent ways. Some will merely wink at the behavior while others will be "moral entrepreneurs" (Becker, 1963). Such inconsistent official response serves to highlight the borderline features of such crimes.

The mixed emotions about drug abuse as a crime come not only from its victimless nature but from the multiple definitions

society has imposed on those substances called drugs (see Brecher, 1972). Alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine are legal drugs in common usage. In addition, prescription drugs are available for controlled use and nonprescription drugs are readily available for use by anyone. However, other drugs such as heroin, LSD, and marihuana are illegal. But, many of the users of marihuana, for example, claim the physiological effects of alcohol and nicotine are more detrimental to the individual user than marihuana. As the battle rages over these issues, many persons have concluded that some legal drugs are potentially quite harmful while at least one illegal drug (specifically, marihuana) may not be particularly harmful.

The question of drug use legality seems to be based less on evidence of its potential harm to the user than on its relationship to the user's life style.

Drug use is regarded as a social problem by other members of our society because certain drugs have become part of a life style whose values are the antithesis of such conventional middle-class values as the pursuit of wealth and occupational success. Drug use, like long hair and unconventional dress, is interpreted as a symbol of an ominous threat to the American way of life. Even if the drugs are not seriously harmful, their use is opposed by those who feel it tends to flaunt basic moral values.

(Clausen, 1971:187)

Jock Young (1971a, b) makes this point by bringing an economic perspective to bear on the issue.

...the reaction against the drug-taker springs from moral indignation engendered by an economy which dictates the necessity of maintaining both productivity and high consumption. The ideal citizen of the post-Keynesian age is one who is disciplined in his work yet hedonistic in his leisure. For we are taught to value the deferred gratification of hard work, although seeking our identity within the hedonistic consumption patterns which shape our free time. As a result we feel guilty about both, and the consequent fundamental ambivalence is deeply ingrained in our social relationships. Thus the Bohemian fascinates us because he seems to us to be acting out our fantasies of unrestrained hedonism, while at the same time he angers us because he disdains hard work and does not earn his free time. Furthermore, the illicit drugs he uses are seen as reprehensible yet effective sources of pleasure. Alasdair MacIntyre captured the attitude well when he wrote:

Most of the hostility that I have met with comes from people who have never examined the facts at all. I suspect that what makes them dislike cannabis is not the belief that the effects of taking it are harmful but rather a horrifying suspicion that here is a source of pure pleasure which is available for those who have not earned it, who do not deserve it.

(Young, 1971b:55)

The social definition of illegal drug use and users in the United States is therefore a highly charged issue. About 34 years ago, in an article on opiate users, Lindesmith (1940) commented that all illicit drug users tended to be viewed as "dope fiends" and therefore a threat to society. He traced the poor condition of the opiate user not to the drug but to the social situation which the law and public created for the user.

The treatment of addicts in the United States today is on no higher plane than the persecution of witches of other ages, and like the latter it is to be hoped that it will soon become merely another dark chapter of history.

(Lindesmith, 1940:208)

Barber (1967) notes that the "dope fiend" myth about drug abuse is still prevalent in the United States today.

The non-medical use of narcotics in the United States is not only a crime...but "one of the most stigmatized of crimes."

(Barber, 1967:135)

This view is in contrast to the predominant European view that drug abuse is primarily a psychological and medical problem (Barber, 1967:136).

The official and public reactions to drug abuse and abusers are precisely the sort of problem amenable to analysis from the labeling perspective. Becker's well known definition of deviance makes this point.

...social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an offender." The deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.

(Becker, 1963:9)

Drug abuse defined in parts of the world as a psychological and/or medical problem is defined in the United States as a legal problem, that is, a crime. The apprehended drug abuser is declared a criminal with all of the ramifications that entails for the individual. In order to explore those resulting ramifications we now turn to a discussion of the labeling perspective, its relationship to self-concept, and the impact of labeling on the individual.

3 The Labeling Perspective

The labeling perspective or labeling approach as Schur (1971) calls it has been referred to by many as a "labeling theory." In reality the labeling perspective is a particular application of the basic sociological perspective, which does not qualify as a "new theory." Furthermore, it lacks essential elements needed to give it the status of a theory (see Schur, 1971:34-36). Others have commented on this point (Simmons, 1965; Johnson, 1973b), but all agree that, theory or not, the perspective is a useful one (see Merton and Nisbet, 1971:825-829; Schur, 1971).

The following statement is in the tradition of those early concerned with the issue (Tannenbaum, 1938; Lemert, 1951) and those more recently responsible for the revival of the position (Kitsuse, 1962; Becker, 1963).

The labeling hypothesis maintains that being publicly identified as deviant results in a "spoiled" public identity. It contends that being labeled "deviant" results in a degree of social liability (i.e., exclusion from participation in certain conventional groups or activities) which would not occur if the deviance were not made a matter of public knowledge. It further suggests that the social liability incurred by being labeled "deviant" has the ultimate effects of reinforcing the deviance.

(Foster, 1971; Foster, Dinitz, and Reckless, 1972:202)

This view of the labeling phenomenon is commonly held among social scientists although it is more narrow in scope than the labeling perspective implies. The broader approach (Schur, 1969b;312) involves positive as well as negative labeling (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; Payne, 1973) and informal labeling as well as formal or official labeling (Whyte, 1955;

14-25; Berger, 1963:66-121; Antonio, 1973). In considering these additional dimensions of the labeling perspective it is somewhat easier to note the tie between the socialization process, role expectations, achieved and ascribed status and the labeling process (see, for example, Scott, 1969: 14-19; Mercer, 1973: 12-27). Before dealing with these issues, a major criticism leveled at the labeling approach will be briefly discussed in light of the broadened labeling perspective.

The major criticism of the labeling perspective (see Merton and Nisbet, 1971:826-829; Schur, 1971) questions the claim made by some that it is an approach which explains deviance in general. As several critics (Gibbs, 1966; Simmons, 1969; Denzin, 1970; Gove, 1970a; Gove 1970b; Gibbs, 1972) have pointed out, labeling does not account for the genesis of deviant behavior or for deviant behavior which goes unapprehended. However, the broader labeling perspective utilizing informal and self-labeling can, in part, account for incipient deviant behavior. The informal labeling of predelinquents, lower class children, and black children, for example, may well spur them on to deviant behavior. Once involved in deviant behavior, these same persons may self-label and reinforce their deviant behavior pattern. Whether this indeed occurs is an unanswered empirical question but it does suggest that the labeling perspective can deal with these issues. The broad labeling perspective then is a flexible approach tied to a basic sociological point of view.

What then is the relationship between the labeling perspective and those basic sociological concepts mentioned above? Essentially, labeling is the ascription of a status to a person (see, for example, Schur, 1969a:115) or the achievement of a status (Mercer, 1973:27). Whether the status is ascribed or achieved may well depend on how one views the labeling situation. For example, if the person labeled

is viewed as being victimized by the label (Akers, 1968:463; Gove, 1970a:881-882) then the status is ascribed. If, on the other hand, the problem is seen as lying with the person labeled, the status is achieved. Typically the labeling perspective has dealt with negative labeling and the person labeled has been viewed as a victim of society's casting him outside the pale (Becker, 1963).

With the assignment of a status goes a set of role expectations for behavior (see Merton,

1957:368-370; Loomis and Loomis, 1961:282-284). In various ways the labelers socialize the labelee into his label-status. After a time, if the socialization process is successful, the labelee has incorporated the role behavior demanded by the status into his behavior repertoire. Successful labeling, positive or negative, therefore is a basic process of socialization (see Scott, 1969:14-17; Mercer, 1973:21-23).

4 The Labeling Process and Self-Concept

We now turn to the question of how the self-concept is involved in the labeling process. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective of Cooley (1964) and Mead (Strauss, 1964), the development of a self-concept is a product of interaction with others. Cooley talks about the "looking-glass self" (Cooley, 1964:184) in which a person imagines his appearance to another, imagines the other's judgment of that appearance, and has some self-feeling (pride or mortification) about that judgment. This view demonstrates how the shared rules of a group or society become internalized and thereby serve as an internal control for behavior in addition to the external controls of "other" reactions. For Mead, learning to take the role of the "other" permits one to interact successfully with others by understanding, anticipating, and appropriately responding to them. In this process of incorporating the "generalized other" the self comes to be defined in terms of others. As Goffman (1959) points out, one may choose to play his role with tongue-in-cheek, which he calls "role distance." In so doing the actor plays through the role with no involvement or identification with the role. In the process of identity or self-concept formation such calculated role playing is unlikely since the least stressful behavioral option is to incorporate the role expectations and to become what the expectations demand. This view is presented in a clear and interesting fashion by Berger (1963). In reply to the question of why we tend to cooperate with societal expectations rather than rebel against them, he says:

The sociological answer to this question has already been alluded to--because most of the time we ourselves desire just that which society expects of us. We want to obey the rules. We want the parts that society has assigned to us.

(Berger, 1963:93)

He goes on to say:

The role forms, shapes, patterns both action and actor. It is very difficult to pretend in this world. Normally, one becomes what one plays at.

(Berger, 1963:98)

In the socialization process, learning rules for behavior, learning what others expect from you, learning how others respond to you, and learning how others feel combine to develop a concept of the self, an identity.

Identities are socially bestowed. They must also be socially sustained, and fairly steadily so. One cannot be human all by oneself and, apparently, one cannot hold on to any particular identity all by oneself.

(Berger, 1963:100)

The labeling process, as noted earlier,

is the socialization to a particular status with its associated role expectations. We have also noted that from the symbolic interactionist perspective the formation of a self-concept is intimately tied to the socialization process. Therefore, the labeling of a person is highly likely to have some impact on his self-concept. And indeed, the self-concept is an important feature of the labeling perspective as it has been developed.

Tannenbaum (1938), in tracing through the process of how the adolescent involved in delinquent behavior is eventually labeled by the community, draws on the earlier work of W. I. Thomas (1928). Thomas presented the idea that social definitions of a situation were crucial to the behavior of the participants. From the definition of the situation came the "self-fulfilling prophecy" (see also Merton, 1957: 421-434) which holds that if a situation is defined as real then the consequences of that definition are real. This all draws our attention to the importance of social definitions of reality. Tannenbaum described the conflict between the delinquent adolescent and the community as one of "two opposing definitions of the situation" (Tannenbaum, 1938:17).

From the community's point of view, the individual who used to do bad and mischievous things has now become a bad and unredeemable human being. From the individual's point of view there has taken place a similar change. He has gone slowly from a sense of grievance and injustice, of being unduly mistreated and punished, to a recognition that the definition of him as a human being is different from that of other boys in his neighborhood, his school, street, community. This recognition on his part becomes a process of self-identification....

(Tannenbaum, 1938:17)
(Emphasis added)

He goes on to describe the trappings of official response to the boy's delinquent behavior which transform the boy into the delinquent.

The first dramatization of the "evil" which separates the child out of his group for specialized treatment plays a greater role in making the criminal than perhaps any other experience.

The process of making the criminal, therefore, is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious; it becomes

a way of stimulating, suggesting, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained of.

The person becomes the thing he is described as being.

(Tannenbaum, 1938:19-20)
(Emphasis added)

Lemert (1951) draws a distinction between primary and secondary deviance while tracing personality changes correlated with the shift from primary to secondary deviance. In essence he is showing how societal reaction to deviant behavior encourages the individual to occupy the status of deviant and thereby to develop a concomitant self-concept, thus ensuring a deviant career or secondary deviance.

However, if the deviant acts are repetitive and have a high visibility, and if there is a severe societal reaction, which, through a process of identification is incorporated as part of the "me" of the individual, the probability is greatly increased that the integration of existing roles will be disrupted and that reorganization based upon a new role or roles will occur Reorganization may be the adoption of another normal role in which the tendencies previously defined as "pathological" are given a more acceptable social expression. The other general possibility is the assumption of a deviant role, if such exists; or, more rarely, the person may organize an aberrant sect or group in which he creates a special role of his own. When a person begins to employ his deviant behavior or a role based upon it as a means of defense, attack, or adjustment to the overt and covert problems created by the consequent societal reaction to him, his deviation is secondary. Objective evidences of this change will be found in the symbolic appurtenances of the new role, in clothes, speech, posture, and mannerisms, which in some cases heighten social visibility, and which in some cases serve as symbolic cues to professionalization.

(Lemert, 1951:75-76)

More recently, Wilkens (1965) employed a labeling perspective to his presentation of a deviation amplification model. One of the model's components is the self-concept of the "deviant." Briefly, certain acts are defined as deviant and the "parent system" excludes the actors by the process of definition. This provides the actors with an information set which enables them to begin to perceive

themselves as deviants. It is important to note that at this point Wilkins comments, "Perhaps the main way in which any person gets to know what sort of person he is is through feedback from other persons." (Wilkins, 1965:92). Of course, this is precisely the position the symbolic interaction perspective takes. Wilkins continues:

The action taken by society and the resulting self-perception of the individuals defined as deviant, lead to the isolation and alienation of the specified individuals.

This provides the first part of a deviation amplifying system. The definition of society leads to the development of the self-perception as 'deviant' on the part of the 'outliers' (outlaws), and it is hardly to be expected that people who are excluded by a system will continue to regard themselves as part of it.

The deviant groups will tend to develop their own values which may run counter to the values of the parent system, the system which defined them as 'outliers.'

The increased deviance demonstrated by the deviant groups (resulting from the deviation-amplifying effect of the self-perception, which in turn may have derived from the defining acts of society) results in more forceful action by the conforming groups against the nonconformists.

(Wilkins, 1965:92)

The feedback process from the definers to the deviants and back to the definers amplifies the self-perception of persons as deviants and thereby produces deviant behavior (see Hess, 1971).

The preceding works have exemplified the basic sociological perspective of labeling. Through the ascription or achievement of a particular status the individual may fulfill the role expectations of that status and thereby identify in terms of his self-concept with that status. Payne (1973) in his discussion of the creation of a deviant self-image presents the following useful diagram.

Societal Reaction to Individual
(Label)

↓

Individual's Awareness and Interpretation of Social Reaction

↓

Revision of Self-Label to Conform to Perceptions of Social Label

(Payne, 1973:35)

Payne's introduction of the self-label serves two purposes for this discussion. First, it demonstrates the process of incorporation or internalization of deviant role expectations by the labeled status incumbent. Secondly, it brings to our attention again the possibility of self-labeling without societal reaction. The "internalized morality" of society or personal internal controls may be as efficient in labeling the individual as are external societal controls.

It is clear then that the labeling process is intimately involved in developing and altering self-concepts (for additional works see Scheff, 1966a; Klapp, 1968; Rubington and Weinberg, 1968; Lofland, 1969; Quinney, 1970; Fabrega and Manning, 1972). The extent to which self-concepts are affected by labeling will be explored next.

Unfortunately, little is empirically known about the impact of the labeling on the self-concept (see Freidson, 1965:74). However, the literature which comments on this and related issues provides some theoretical indication of how the self-concept and labeling interact.

The simplistic view of the labeling process holds that the label is applied and the person labeled responds according to the particular label. This view has been stated in an interesting way by Akers (1968).

One sometimes gets the impression from reading this literature that people go about minding their own business, and then--"wham"--bad society comes along and slaps them with a stigmatized label. Forced into the role of deviant the individual has little choice but to be deviant. This is an exaggeration, of course, but such an image can be gained easily from an overemphasis on the impact of labeling.

(Akers, 1968:463)

Akers is quite correct to warn us against

overemphasizing the impact of labeling because the impact is bound to be variable.

While such dramatized insults to identity and integrity cut deep for some, their impact varies and is absorbed or discounted by others.

(Lemert, 1971:12)

Here Lemert is discussing the impact of a part of the labeling process, namely, juvenile court proceedings which have been described as a "degradation ritual" (Garfinkel, 1956).

The variability of labeling impact is also noted by Hyman, Stokes, and Strauss.

Considering the sharp definition of their situation, the blind might also seem to be ideal witnesses for the advocates of labeling theory to call upon.

The label has been applied to the blind, but oddly enough it often does not stick. When asked the direct question, 39 percent of the sample of blind children answered that they do not consider themselves blind. In the equivalent subgroup of adults in the sample (also blinded in early childhood or from birth and living in the same area of the country) who have had years and years of labeling, 37 percent reported that they do not regard themselves as blind. Such are the mysterious workings of the self. Thus studies of the blind suggest that, even when labeling is most flagrant, this psychic shaping of reality must be taken into account.

(Hyman, Stokes, and Strauss, 1973:406)

Who accepts a label, who rejects a label, and why, is still not wholly understood.

5 Resisting Labeling

We turn now to the consideration of four major categories of resisting the labeling process. They are socialization of norms, reference groups, techniques of neutralization, and the negotiation of reality.

The person who is socialized to a deviant mode of life views deviance as "normal." The normative definitions of deviance for the labeling social system are never internalized or shared by the "normal deviant" (see Bredemeier and Stephenson, 1962:126-128). Apprehending and labeling such a deviant will have little effect on him (see DeLamater, 1968:454). From his point of view it is the others who are the "deviants" and their labeling has little or no relevance for him.

The person in the preceding example is, no doubt, also supported by a deviant reference group. A reference group is any group one refers to or identifies with for definitions of the social situation (see Merton, 1957: 225-386). Shoham (1970) indirectly comments on the effects of labeling and one's identification or lack of it with the labeling group by noting in another context that

stigma as a means of social control is more effective when the gap between self-image and social image (that is, the labeling group's image or definition) is narrow and less effective when there is a wide gap between the self-image and the social image. The socialized deviant maintains contact with his deviant reference group and thereby neutralizes the effect of the labeling group. The more deeply a person is involved in sharing the norms and values of the labeling group, the more likely the labeling will have an effect on the person labeled. As Shoham hypothesizes, the more distant the relationship, the less the impact.

This point is supported by Dinitz, Dynes, and Clarke (1969:20) in their discussion of the stigmatization process on various types of deviants. They conclude that where societal response is protective toward the deviant, thus co-opting the deviant and reducing the gap between self and social images, labeling is quite successful and low self-esteem results. But, where society is punitive toward the deviant and the gap is widened, societal labeling and impact on self-esteem varies.

This point is also supported dramatically in an article by Reiss (1964) describing the homosexual behavior of lower class boys.

The reactions of the larger society, in defining the behavior as homosexual is unimportant in their own self-definition. What is important to them is the reactions of their peers to violation of peer group norms which define roles in the peer-queer transaction.

(Reiss, 1965:207)

Here the peer reference group successfully insulates the individual from the labeling of the larger society and thereby preserves his self-concept.

In some cases labeling of a deviant by the larger society, which does not serve as the deviant's reference group, is a rewarding experience.

In such criminal subcultures and groups the stigmatized social pariahs may obtain a number of rewards: status and positive evaluation from peers, enhancing the offender's self-image....

(Hills, 1971:52)

As Hills notes, not only does the deviant reference group assist the individual in resisting the labeling assault on his self-concept, but his self-concept is "enhanced" by the experience! In sum, the reference group can serve as a powerful neutralizer of the labeling process.

Sykes and Matza (1957) present five techniques for neutralizing labeling and thereby avoiding feelings that might contribute to a poorer self-concept. Three of the techniques are denial techniques -- denial of responsibility, denial of injury, and denial of the victim. The offender attributes his behavior to forces beyond his control such as having a broken home or bad companions. In denial of injury the offender denies that anyone was harmed by his activity -- he stole a car but who got hurt? And in the denial of the victim the offender might insist that the victim "had it coming to him" so that the victim has not been victimized but justly punished. The fourth technique of neutralization is called condemnation of the condemners where the offender uses the tactic that the best defense is a good offense and accuses his accusers of various wrongdoings. The final technique is called the appeal to high loyalty where the offender places his loyalty to friends or

relatives above the demands of the law. Using these techniques the deviant "tends to develop a self-conception that allows him to admit his delinquencies to himself without damage to his self-esteem."

(Hartung, 1965:120)

While the above techniques of neutralization are described in the context of official sanctions, it should be noted that the danger of labeling to the self-concept does not only come from the officials of society but, as mentioned earlier, from informal sources as well as from the self. These sources must be neutralized too, or the danger to the self-concept is just as great:

Also, if the person cannot neutralize conventional norms and standards, he may label himself as a deviant; as a result, he will incur a negative self-evaluation and may perceive his primary relations as being disrupted. Such self-labelling may produce as much of a self-fulfilling prophecy as does labelling by society's agents.

(DeLamater, 1968:454)

These neutralization techniques therefore permit the individual to resist the labeling process and to maintain their self-concept (see Schervish, 1973:51; Emerson, 1969:142-143 for a review of similar techniques).

Another defense against the impact of labeling on the self-concept is to negotiate the seriousness of the label with the label definers (see Scheff, 1968). Lorber (1967) notes that when a self-label does not agree with a given social label a person may negotiate a new label.

This does not neutralize the label assigned but modifies it and thereby minimizes changes in the self-concept. Another negotiating strategy is to give an "account" which allows others to excuse or understand the deviant behavior and which thereby preserves one's self-esteem (see Scott and Lyman, 1968). This strategy is much like some techniques of neutralization. Juveniles apprehended by the police are often able to negotiate labels based on their demeanor toward the police (Piliavin and Briar, 1964). The flippant, "fractious" or "nonchalant" youths are typically dealt with more severely than are the "contrite," "respectful," and slightly "fearful" youths who were successful in negotiating their "basically law abiding or at least 'salvageable'" labels (see also Emerson, 1969:101-102).

We have seen that when a label is applied its impact on the labelee is not necessarily complete or final (see Schur, 1973:125-126). Various conditions mitigate the impact in ad-

dition to the several strategies available to the labelee. However, our knowledge about the impact of labeling is sparse and leaves much to be discovered.

6 The Effect of Apprehension

Gold (1970) and Gold and Williams (1969) provide data on the effect of apprehension on subsequent juvenile delinquent behavior. Gold (1970), in a study of detected and undetected delinquent behavior in a large Midwestern city, reported that when a group of adolescents apprehended by the police were matched with unapprehended adolescents sharing the same social and delinquent behavior characteristics, the apprehended group showed significantly more incidences of delinquent behavior subsequent to their apprehension than did their match group. Gold and Williams (1969) replicated the Gold study with matched pairs of juveniles from a national sample of adolescents. Their findings supported the Gold data and they concluded that "apprehension itself contributes to further delinquency" (Gold and Williams, 1969:10). The dynamics of why this relationship occurs are not explored by Gold and Williams. However, Gold (1970:108) suggests that perhaps the apprehended youth must continue his delinquent behavior or else risk being labeled "chicken" by his peers. Gold also suggests that the original motives for involvement in delinquent behavior might be untouched by the apprehension and that, therefore, the behavior continues. In this view it is reasonable to expect some of the unapprehended matches to share these motivations and to continue their behavior. Indeed, some did continue their delinquent behavior but not enough of them to view this explanation as the entire explanation. Gold offers the additional explanation that the apprehended juvenile may simply be angered and strike out with further delinquent behavior. The empirical explanation for increased deviance as the result of official labeling has yet to be given. However, these two studies clearly demonstrate that official apprehension often serves to increase subsequent deviant behavior.

The labeling perspective on this issue has been clearly stated by Duncan (1969).

...stigma resulting from being officially labeled as a "delinquent" increases the probability of a youth engaging in further delinquent behavior.

This stigma acts to foster delinquent role enactment, isolates the youth from effective social control, cuts him off from many legitimate opportunities, and opens up illegitimate opportunities to him.

(Duncan, 1969:41)

And Wheeler and Cottrell (1966) add to this perspective.

If the labeling hypothesis is correct, official intervention may further define the youth as delinquent in the eyes of neighbors, family members, and peers, thus making it more difficult for him to resume conventional activities.

(Wheeler and Cottrell, 1966:23)

However, Foster (1971) and Foster, Dinitz, and Reckless (1972) report that their study of apprehended boys found very few who perceived any difficulties in their interpersonal relationships with family or friends as the result of their official labeling. They therefore concluded that the social liability incurred by apprehension is overestimated by the labeling perspective (Foster, Dinitz, and Reckless, 1972:208).

Despite the pros and cons of the issue there is much agreement (see, for example, Wheeler and Cottrell, 1966, Lemert, 1967b; Werthman, 1967; Schur, 1973) that official intervention in delinquent behavior often serves to propel the juvenile from primary deviance to secondary or career deviance (Lemert, 1951).

There is a very important distinction between engaging in a delinquent act and following a delinquent career organized around the repetitive commission of such acts. Given the relatively minor, episodic, and perhaps situationally induced character of much delinquency, many who have engaged in minor forms of delinquency once or twice may grow out of this pattern of behavior as they move toward adulthood. For these, the labeling theorists argue, a concerted policy of doing nothing may be more helpful than active intervention, if the long-range goal is to reduce the probability of repetition of the acts.

(Wheeler and Cottrell,
1966:23)

It has been noted that most delinquent behavior will, in time, "mature out" (Lemert, 1967b:94; Werthman, 1967:155; Corrections, 1973:248). Henley and Adams (1973:514) report that for the cohorts of college graduates they studied, the incidence and prevalence of marihuana use was increasing despite the increasing age of the graduates. But, for those graduates who were married and parents the marihuana use ceased. This cessation was presumably due to the "maturing" effect of marriage and parenthood responsibilities.

Because of the "maturing out" phenomenon attributed to delinquent behavior it has been suggested that these young offenders be dealt with by what Lemert calls "judicious nonintervention" (Lemert, 1967b:96; see also, Corrections, 1973:248; Schur, 1973). This does not mean adopting a "do nothing" posture but rather suggests steering the "doing" from the official agencies of society back to parents, neighbors, and the like. Problems should be dealt with on this level and the juvenile court should be "an agency of last resort for children, holding to a doctrine analogous to that of appeal courts which require that all other remedies be exhausted before a case will be considered" (Lemert, 1967b:96).

Despite the somewhat contradictory explanations for the impact of apprehension on the offender's subsequent behavior, there is evidence that increased deviant behavior often results. We now turn to a study which presents

data on the relationship between apprehension and self-esteem.

Jensen (1972a), in a study of 2,589 black and white adolescent males, looked at the relationship between official delinquency (youths apprehended for delinquent behavior) and two self-concept measures -- self-esteem and perception of self as delinquent. It should be noted that the self-concept measures were taken subsequent to the official apprehension of approximately 97%-99% of the total of apprehended youths in the sample.

Jensen reports that the relationship between official delinquency and the evaluation of the self as delinquent is stronger for whites than blacks in his sample. Among whites this relationship is weakened in the case of the middle and upper class youths and for those with delinquent companions. While the direction of the reported relationship is consistent for both races, the strength of the relationship is weak.

... there is a persistent tendency for those who have been officially evaluated as delinquent to think of themselves and to feel thought of by others as delinquent, but this tendency was more characteristic of whites than blacks. In addition, the relationships among blacks and whites did tend to converge within certain subcategories, either as a product of stronger relationships in some categories of blacks, weaker relationships in some categories of whites, or both. For example, among whites, the higher their class standing (in terms of father's educational attainment), the weaker the relationship between recorded delinquency and delinquent evaluations. This finding was consistent with Hewitt's ... contention that lower-class delinquency "feeds upon official definitions" while middle class delinquents are insulated by "understanding" adults. However, this interpretation must be tempered with the recognition that blacks tend to be fairly well-insulated (relative to whites) irrespective of class standing.

Delinquent companions condition the consequences of official evaluations only among whites. Whites with several delinquent friends exhibited a relationship virtually identical to the black adolescents in general. Some adolescents, then, may be "doubly insulated" by adults prepared to allow "mistakes" and peers involved in similar activities.

In sum, the application of official labels appears least consequential among those who can readily rationalize their act-

ivities or who are insulated by "understanding" parents and peers.

(Jensen, 1972a:139-140)

Jensen notes that while the relationship between official delinquency and perception of self as delinquent differs for blacks and whites, the perception of self bears a weak negative relationship to self-esteem for both racial groups. Apparently, although a youth may accept the delinquent label, his self-esteem is largely unaffected. The relationship between official delinquency and self-esteem is even more remote.

Given the magnitude of the relationships between official definitions and delinquent self-conceptions and between such conceptions and self-esteem we would not expect much of a relationship between official delinquency and self-esteem.

(Jensen, 1972a:141)

So Jensen concludes --

... these data suggest that contact with official labelers has no significant consequences for feelings of personal worth for most subcategories of adolescents.

Of all the subcategories in which the relation between official delinquency and self-esteem was examined, such official definitions made the greatest difference among middle-to-upper-status blacks but even there the relationship was weak ($-.20$, $-.25$). While insignificant, the positive relationship among lower-class blacks, leaves open the possibility that labels intended as stigmatic may have the opposite effect.

(Jensen, 1972a:142)
(Emphasis added)

Jensen's interpretation of a trend relationship suggests that, for at least one group, self-esteem may be slightly improved by official labeling.

In summarizing the findings of these studies, one could say that apprehension encourages increased delinquent behavior, is slightly related to the perception or increased perception of oneself as delinquent, and has no consequences for one's level of self-esteem. Since each study deals with a different effect of apprehension, the questions concerning the impact of apprehension and official labeling on the interaction effects (if any) of behavior and self-concept or its components remain unanswered by these data.

7 Self-Concept Antecedent to Apprehension

In the attempt to determine the impact of official labeling on the self-concept it is useful to know about the condition of the self-concept prior to the apprehension. Fitts and Hammer (1969) have stated the problem well.

The question has often been raised as to whether the self concept causes behavior or results from behavior; whether delinquency results from an already existent inadequate self concept or whether the low self concept stems from society's reaction to the delinquent pattern of behavior. The question has been raised but not answered.

(Fitts and Hammer, 1969:81)

While the main focus is on the self-concept antecedent to apprehension of official label-

ing, the informal and self-labeling processes should not be neglected. For example, Gemignani (1973) and Harris (1968) draw our attention to the phenomenon of predelinquent informal labeling which, in the formative years, may have a definite impact on the socialization-self-concept formation process. Fisher (1972:82) notes that public or official labeling "appears not to set in motion a process of differential treatment, rather it appears simply to reflect, and perhaps exacerbate, a process already ongoing."

In a longitudinal study done by Reckless and others at Ohio State it was determined that a good self-concept acted as an insulator against delinquent behavior (see Reckless, Dinitz, and Murray, 1956; Reckless, Dinitz, and Kay, 1957; Reckless, Dinitz, and Murray, 1957; Scarpitti, Murray, Dinitz, and Reckless, 1960; Dinitz, Scarpitti, and Reckless, 1962; Reckless, 1967; Reckless and Dinitz, 1967). Unfortunately, their measure of self-concept

was found to be inadequate thus negating the conclusions drawn from their data (see Schwartz and Tangri, 1965; Tangri and Schwartz 1967; Orcutt, 1970; Schwartz and Stryker, 1970; and Jensen, 1972a).

Schwartz and Tangri (1965) essentially replicated the Reckless study but with a much improved self-concept measure. Their data are interpreted as supporting the Reckless contention that a positive self-concept insulates the "good" boy in a high delinquency area. In a later study reported by Schwartz and Stryker (1970) the data are less clear in their support of the Reckless posi-

tion. The data were taken from a predominantly black school and for reasons that are unclear, racial comparisons produce an inconsistent picture. Self-concept for white boys in this situation apparently does not serve as an insulator against delinquency. It does appear, however, that the Reckless hypothesis is supported for black boys.

The evidence then for the self-concept as an insulator against deviant behavior is inconclusive and demonstrates the need for additional work in this area. Therefore, the condition of the self-concept antecedent to apprehension cannot be determined with any certainty from the preceding studies.

8 Self-Concept Antecedent to Drug Abuse

Next, the self-concept as an antecedent condition to drug abuse will be explored. Drug abuse, particularly drug addiction, has been treated in the literature, as Kaplan and Meyerowitz (1970) note, as stemming from a pathogenic environment. The general view is that the "negative" environment fosters a negative self-concept which in turn leads to drug abuse. It should be stressed that this view is derived mainly from data on the drug addict although it tends to be generalized to all drug abuse. The drug addict has been seen as suffering various sorts of personality disorders (see, for example, Ausubel, 1948; Chein, Gerard, Lee, and Rosenfeld, 1964) which imply a poor self-concept. Winick (1957:19-20) contends that there "appears to be no one kind of psychiatric diagnosis which is common to drug addicts" and that "all kinds of people can and do become drug addicts." While this statement would seem to allow for antecedent conditions to drug addiction other than pathological ones, Lindesmith (1965b) indicates this is not the prevailing position on the subject.

An astonishing variety of terms have been employed in the attempt to characterize the addict, particular types of addicts, and the addiction-prone personality, usually with the assumption that the attribute named has some etiological significance. From a small segment of the literature the following examples have been gleaned: "alienated,"

"frustrated," "passive psychopath," "aggressive psychopath," "emotionally unstable," "nomadic," "inebriate," "narcissistic," "dependent," "sociopath," "hedonistic," "childlike," "paranoid," "rebellious," "hostile," "infantile," "neurotic," "overattached to the mother," "retreatist," "cyclothymic," "constitutionally immoral," "hysterical," "neurasthenic," "hereditarily neuropathic," "weak character and will," "lack of moral sense," "self-indulgent," "introspective," "extroverted," "self-conscious," "motivational immaturity," "pseudo-psychopathic delinquent," and, finally, "essentially normal."

He goes on to say:

It is of interest to observe that in this list opposite traits are sometimes mentioned; that most of the same terms are applied to other groups, such as alcoholics, prisoners, tramps, sex offenders, and thieves; that almost all these descriptions are based on observations of addicts in captivity or on secondhand reports of such observations; that many of the alleged attributes are clearly effects or integral aspects of addiction, rather than antecedents, and that all of them are poorly defined concepts, frequently used simply as expressions of disapproval. The multiplicity of these char-

acterizations is scientifically embarrassing, and their number is increasing.

(Lindesmith, 1965b:132)

Lindesmith is correct to point out that a major difficulty with studies of this type is that they make after-the-fact assessments of "caught" drug abusers (see, for example, McGrath and Scarpitti, 1970:5-7 for comments on this issue; see Seymour, 1972-74 for a description of such a study). Simmons (1969) aptly comments on this problem and draws our attention to another issue.

Probably the most widespread and deep-running of these biases comes from generalizing about deviants after studying that special fraction of deviants who have been caught or who have somehow volunteered for treatment.... This special subgroup is most certainly unrepresentative of all deviants.

To generalize about all deviants from only those who have, in some sense, failed at deviance is as one-sided and misleading as to portray school life solely on the basis of dropouts.

(Simmons, 1969:7)

Not only are current characteristics of drug abusers attributed to prior states, but this is done with a highly select group! Ideally, user characteristics should be known prior to abuse and this information should be drawn from a representative sample of abusers.

Despite these pitfalls there are some studies that manage to minimize the problem of attributing current states of abusers to prior states by using prior history data to impute early self-concept levels. This literature focuses on adolescent drug abuse as a means of preserving a positive self-concept against the onset of a flagging self-concept. In general, adolescents are seen as using drugs because they are having "problems growing up" (Land, 1969:45). Specific to the growing up problems are "inter-personal experiences which are predictive of self-derogation" (Kaplan and Meyerowitz, 1970:216), school achievement problems (Gerard and Kornetsky, 1955:474; Kaplan and Meyerowitz, 1970:216), and problems of status transition to adulthood (Schiff, 1959; Chein, Gerard, Lee, and Rosenfeld, 1964; Chein, 1965; Rubington, 1967).

The preceding studies concerned themselves mainly with drug addiction and thereby the narcotic drugs. Grinspoon's (1971) comments suggest that less serious and more transitory adolescent problems may lead to the intensified use of another drug, marihuana.

A major loss frequently precedes a period of intensified use of cannabis. This loss may be of self-esteem following examinations or a break-up with a girlfriend, or it may be the loss of old and cherished life-orienting values which the student felt compelled to abandon in his often lonely search for truth and meaning. During such periods, which are generally self-limited, the promise of euphoric escape will increase his interest in the use of marihuana.

(Grinspoon, 1971:180)

As trouble increases intensified marihuana use may be supplemented by more serious drugs.

If a student is more troubled, he is more likely to use marihuana frequently and to experiment with other drugs as well, particularly the "hallucinogens."

(Grinspoon, 1971:180)

Perhaps this pattern of drug use is peculiar to Grinspoon's Harvard students. Nevertheless, it is interesting to speculate that there may be a relationship between the "seriousness" of a youth's problem and the drug he elects to use to cope with that problem. Regardless, the evidence indicates that adolescent drug abuse is, in part, a response to self-concept problems.

While some drug abuse, to an unknown extent, may be precipitated by self-concept difficulties (see Brehm and Back, 1968). There is evidence that marihuana users frequently have quite different motives for use.

It is important, however, not to think everyone who uses marihuana as having some kind of problem. In fact, a very strong case could be made on some campuses today, that if a young man goes through four years of college without having tried marihuana, his abstinence is suggestive of a rigidity in his character structure and a fear of his impulses that can hardly be considered desirable.

(Grinspoon, 1971:180)

Marihuana use appears to be an implied part of an adolescent subcultural pattern of beliefs and behavior. The dominant set of subcultural beliefs has been called the "hang-loose" ethic by Simmons and Winograd (1966).

One of the fundamental characteristics of the hang-loose ethic is that it is

irreverent. It repudiates, or at least questions, such cornerstones of conventional society as Christianity, "my country right or wrong," the sanctity of marriage and premarital chastity, civil obedience, the accumulation of wealth, the right and even competence of parents, the schools, and the government to head and make decisions for everyone -- in sum, the Establishment.

(Simmons and Winograd,
1966:12)

Suchman (1968) in a study of college students, hypothesized that "the more the student embraces the 'hang-loose' ethic (as opposed to the so-called 'Protestant ethic') the more frequently will he make use of drugs" (Suchman, 1968:147). While Suchman found that taking LSD and drinking alcoholic beverages were related to the hang-loose ethic, marihuana was the drug most highly associated with the ethic.

Our data would strongly suggest that use of marijuana is predominantly a social act favored by a sub-group in our society which happens to be disenchanted with the established order and for whom such use has become simply a normal preference for their own particular recreational drug.

(Suchman, 1968:154-155)

It might be argued by some that those who subscribe to the hang-loose ethic are deviant and suffer from a poor self-concept. Schrag (1971) neatly summarizes this position in his review of the social control or containment perspective.

It is argued that self control implies a healthy self concept, a positive

orientation towards socially approved goals, high tolerance for frustration, and firm commitment to legitimate norms, rules, and values. To the extent that these characteristics are for some reason lacking, there is a weakening of inner controls, and deviance is more probable.

(Schrag, 1971:83)

However, the social reformer, the rebel leader, and the innovator all operate with a strong belief in themselves and their causes. Merton (Merton and Nisbet, 1971:829-832) distinguishes between this kind of behavior, which he calls "nonconforming behavior," and the "aberrant behavior" of the person whose deviance is totally self-serving. Therefore, the high sense of commitment to certain ideals and a particular life style that involves the use of marihuana could well entail a positive self-concept on the part of its advocates.

It would appear from the evidence reviewed that, typically, users of the narcotic drugs are having some self-concept difficulties prior to use. Prior to apprehension for use, their self-concept is apparently maintained at a positive level due to use. It is highly unlikely, however, that this is the case for all addicts that are apprehended.

In the case of marihuana there is some evidence of use as a defense against lowered self-concept. But the bulk of use appears to be in a subcultural context by persons with rebellious but intact self-concepts.

In sum, the self-concepts of drug abusers antecedent to use and to apprehension by officials are a mixed bag of theoretical guesses, conjecture, and little empirical evidence.

9 Drug Abuse

In the literature on drug abuse that bears on the central concern of this paper, two drugs receive the major attention of writers--marihuana and heroin. Thus this paper has drawn information mainly from studies of "addicts" and from "marihuana users." Hopefully these two drug abuse styles and societal response to them adequately represent the major relationships of self-concept and behavior before and after apprehension by officials. Marihuana and heroin use will be considered separately, when possible, in terms of official response and the possible effects of this response on user self-concept.

The subcultural meaning and use of drugs has been strongly emphasized in the literature, as noted by the preceding discussion of peer group support for marihuana use. Evidently, selected drugs may be chosen for use from the entire range of drugs by a particular subcultural group and these drugs are considered part of their "ethic" (Cavan, 1970). Davis and Munoz (1970) note that:

...drug use among the hippies has profound ideological meanings and forms an integral part of their everyday life. It symbolizes attack not only on the normal society but also on the normal form of consciousness. Their opposition does not usually involve a specific attack on our society, but is rather a total withdrawal and rejection of the establishment's way of life. Hippies move in a world of their own, generally disregarding this world, except insofar as it occasionally impinges upon their lives."

(Davis and Munoz,
1970:301)

One specific drug, marihuana, has been the focus of much attention recently (see

Marihuana, 1972a). Many writers have noted the strong subcultural peer group support or "ethic" legitimating the use of marihuana (Blumer, 1967; Carey, 1970a; Fort, 1970; Zimmerman, 1971). As was stated earlier, such support serves as an effective insulator of the self-concept against the official labeling process.

Johnson (1973a), on the other hand, describes how drug use in a subculture may develop not as part of an ethic or philosophy of life but rather in competition with peers for status and prestige.

Unconventional behavior will emerge from peer group participation because of the norm of veiled competition. To the individual, a crucial measure of success lies in what his friends (peers) think of him. Yet, there is continued competition for prestige within each peer group. Despite a democratic ethos maintaining that the peer group has and wants no leader, the competition for prestige in the group is concealed "under a veneer of non-competitive good-fellowship and fun." This competitiveness leads individuals in the group to experiment with new forms of behavior. Such "operating innovations" frequently depart from what adults want adolescents to do but are an important way by which an individual can claim higher status within the group. If a particular innovation, such as the smoking of marihuana, is done by one person in a peer group and no negative consequences such as arrest or poor health occur, the person can claim a higher status within the group. Such activities are likely to be repeated, with others in the group participating. Once patterns of activity develop, "they generate their own morality, norms, standards and rewards." Patterns of action that may not have been

permitted at an earlier time become tolerated, then accepted, and perhaps even demanded of those participating in the peer group.

(Johnson, 1973a:7-8)

Once this sort of behavior is established in the group, group support and various techniques of insulation and neutralization guard the self-concept against official response.

As previously noted, heroin use appears to be less a group behavior phenomenon and more of an individual response to personal difficulties. While a peer group "ethic" concerning the use of drugs may encourage the adolescent to experiment with heroin, no "heroin use ethic" exists comparable to what might be called the "marihuana use ethic." However, heroin use may occur in response to achieving status and prestige in the peer group (Johnson, 1973a). Feldman (1973) points out that in the "street system" the use of heroin serves a function quite different from those mentioned heretofore.

What apparently has escaped the scrutiny of psychiatrically oriented practitioners are the positive qualities of creativity, daring and resourcefulness that provide the impetus for the top-level solid guys to rise to the top of the street hierarchy. Rather than retreating from the demands of their environment, they utilize the risks of heroin use to insure (or strive toward) a leadership position.

Their use of heroin solidifies a view of them as bold, reckless, criminally defiant -- all praise-worthy qualities from a street perspective. Rather than undermining their influence, efforts to limit their heroin use through legal sanctions merely serve to secure or enhance their status positions on the streets by providing them with opportunities for risk-taking adventures that previous generations of solid guys never knew or even imagined.

(Feldman, 1973:38)

In this particular environment the drug use preference is determined by the person's position in the street system's status hierarchy and by the local ranking of drugs. According to Feldman, the drugs are ranked by risk components of physical harm, addiction potential, and discovery by parents or police (Feldman, 1973:35). Heroin ranks highest followed by the other opiates while diet pills ranked next to last with marihuana in last place (Feldman, 1973:35). It should be noted that other forms of risk-taking behaviors were used to gain and maintain high status in the street system and therefore, not all the "solid guys" chose this behavior. However, the point to be made here is that heroin use, like marihuana use, may be stimulated and supported by the peer group. And as Feldman notes, apprehension for drug abuse under these conditions serves as a status enhancing device.

10 Drug Abuse and Drug Laws

At the beginning of this paper the reasons for the public response to drug abuse were explored. That point will be briefly repeated now. All drug abusers tend to be lumped together in the public mind as immoral and dangerous. Several writers have attributed this public image to the "propaganda" of various law enforcement agencies in the United States (see Lindesmith, 1940) Barber, 1967; Chambliss and Seidman, 1971). In addition, Lindesmith (1940) and others have pointed to the effects of the drug laws and their enforcement in producing to some extent a "self-fulfilling" prophecy.

...it is not the effect of the drug that produces the alleged deterioration of character in the addict, but rather the social situations into which he is forced by the law and by the public's conception of addiction which does the damage. Well-to-do addicts who are in a position to protect themselves against these influences often live useful and productive lives.

(Lindesmith, 1940:203)

Thus Lindesmith describes the "dope fiend" mythology that surrounds the users of the opiate drugs.

The use of marihuana, as noted previously, seems to be caught up more in a peer group life style than most of heroin use. In the case of marihuana, it is the life style that seems to be more objectionable than the effects of this drug compared, say, to the addictive qualities of heroin. The basic objection to marihuana use then is thought to symbolize "not only the war on drugs, but also the attempt to destroy a life-style--the so-called irresponsibility, escapism, radicalism, immorality, long hair and dirty clothes of the pot-smokers--felt to threaten the values of society at large" (Kaplan, 1970: front flap of dustjacket; see also, McIntyre, 1968; Fort, 1970; Clausen, 1971; Young, 1971).

Drug laws in the United States have been much criticized by many writers (see, for example, Lindesmith, 1940; Ausubel, 1948, 1958; Schur, 1965; O'Donnell and Ball, 1966; Fort, 1969; Schur, 1969a). Some of these criticisms will be briefly reviewed. One major objection to the laws for drug addiction is that drug addiction should be seen as a disease and not as a crime (Ausubel, 1948, 1958; O'Connell and Ball, 1966:196). Ausubel comments on this issue.

The chief social anachronism retarding the treatment of drug addiction today is its legal status as a criminal offense despite official recognition of the personality disturbances that underlie it. This is more than a matter of academic importance. In consequence of such legal provision, gross inequalities in the status of the various types of addicts have resulted; the drug addiction hospital has acquired an unmistakable prison atmosphere; and the rehabilitation of the treated drug addict is impeded by the social stigma attached to "ex-convicts." For the same "crime" of using drugs, a patient may be voluntarily admitted to a federal hospital (to be discharged on request whether or not he has completed treatment); receive a probationary sentence usually requiring six months treatment at the hospital; or receive an actual sentence ranging from one to five years. If any offense is to be considered a crime, it is certainly a mockery of justice to base penal punishment solely on the criterion of whether the individual involved has voluntarily confessed his guilt, or has been apprehended by officers of the law.

(Ausubel, 1948:238)

In handling addiction both as a crime and a disease (by virtue of the treatment program), the door is open to whimsical and unjust dealings with the apprehended addict by the criminal justice agencies. Such inconsistent treatment creates a sense of injustice in the addict and often serves to reinforce his drug behavior.

Another objection to the drug laws is documented by Chayet (1967).

In surveying state and federal action, one sees a legislative spectrum running from imposition of the harshest penalties to complete indifference and failure to enact any legislation at all. The majority of states approach the legislative control of all drugs in a uniform manner, totally ignoring varying physiological and psychological effects on the body.

The federal legislation, unlike the state acts based on the uniform law, distinguished between the "hard" drugs (opium, morphine, etc.) and the "soft" drugs (marijuana). Many states subsequently followed the lead of the federal government, but only to the extent of this simplistic division of "hard" and "soft" drugs. The states continued to use the "soft" drug classification when the depressant and stimulant drugs as well as the hallucinogens came into popularity. The effect of this was an incongruous jumble of statutory provisions in no way relating punishment to the potentiality for physical harm.

(Chayet, 1967:93)

Only recently an effort has been made by the Federal government to distinguish between drug addicts and drug abusers for treatment programs in correctional institutions (Narcotic Treatment Programs in Correctional Institutions, 1971). Fort (1969) points to the problem of inconsistencies in the drug laws and their neglect of more common "drugs."

It almost totally neglects the enormous and well-documented abuses of alcohol and tobacco; treats amphetamines and LSD more leniently than marijuana, which has far less potential for abuse; puts drugs with similar chemistry and pharmacology in entirely different penalty categories; primarily attacks and criminalizes user-possessors; and ignores civil penalties in favor of criminal ones.

(Fort, 1969:76)

A primary objection to the drug laws is their "criminalizing" effect on those who are apprehended (for example, see Schur 1965, 1969a: Drug Use in America, 1973a:253). This criticism has grown as the nature of drug abuse and abusers has changed over the years. As Chambliss and Seidman (1971:69) point out, drug abuse in years gone by was most prevalent in the lower classes in our society and particularly among persons in the ghettos. The drugs used by these groups were typically heroin and other narcotic drugs (Brecher, 1972). Law enforcement agencies were free to crack down on the "dope fiend" menace. And the "respectable" members of the community who had drug habits managed to maintain them and run little risk of arrest in so doing. The social class differences in enforcement activity and other applications of the law have been commented on recently by Thio (1973: 5) and less recently by Shakespeare in his play, King Lear.

Through tattered clothes small vices
do appear, robes and furred gowns hide all.
Plate sin with gold and the strong lance
of justice hurtless breaks. Arm it in
rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

(IV. vi. 168-171)

More recently the pattern of drug abuse, particularly marihuana, has appeared in the middle and upper classes in our society. Most of these users from the so-called "respectable" segments of our society are not otherwise deviant or lawbreakers (McGlothlin, 1967:203; Drug Use in America, 1973:253). Justifications for apprehending a criminal dope fiend and addict in the ghetto do not easily transfer in fact to middle-class, marihuana-using, white suburbia. Chambliss and Seidman (1971) trace this problem as law enforcement officials are now experiencing it.

The activities of the law-enforcement agencies in expanding these laws, because they anticipated that this was in their own bureaucratic interests, did not at the time appear to commit them to a program that would involve arresting persons who could cause them "trouble."

The situation has not turned out to be exactly as anticipated. Marijuana and a host of other so-called drugs have been adopted as part of the way of life of students in colleges and high schools. As a consequence, the police have frequently been exposed for using time-tested techniques of entrapment and general harassment of "drug users" in law-enforcement efforts. Since

these techniques have been used against the children of the middle and upper classes, considerable criticism has been leveled at the police which they would normally have avoided.

There is currently underway a strong movement to eliminate marijuana and some other drugs from the list of harmful drugs prohibited by law. This movement, although originally opposed by the law-enforcers, is gaining favor with them precisely because the enforcement of these laws against middle and upper class youths has not brought forth praise and rewards for the enforcement agencies. On the contrary, it has exposed them to a great deal of criticism. In the last analysis it is likely that this fact, and not scientific evidence demonstrating that marijuana is less harmful to users than alcohol, will bring about changes in the laws in question.

(Chambliss and Seidman,
1971:69)

McGlothlin suggests that the police will move more and more toward selective enforcement of the drug laws with the lower socio-economic groups receiving the brunt of the enforcement (McGlothlin, 1967:203-204).

Enforcement activities for marihuana use in student communities at least, appear to be minimal. Barter, Mizner, and Werme (1971) report that in the university community they studied illegal drug use went 99 percent undetected (Barter, Mizner, and Werme, 1971: 197). Other similar studies (see Zimmerman and Wieder, 1971:13-14) report that the youths' perception of low risk of apprehension for drug abuse is an accurate one. Often enforcement officials view the penalties for marihuana use as too severe and defer apprehension on that account (McGlothlin, 1967: 203). However, even on this issue of marihuana use, Packer notes "the law in action is far more lenient toward these new and respectable users than it is toward the more traditional objects of its attention" (Packer, 1968:340). It appears therefore that the criminal justice system and middle-class community are moving in the direction of "patterned evasion" (Williams, 1960) in dealing with drug abuse and marihuana in particular.

The National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse notes this movement (see also Packer, 1968:340).

From this analysis of enforcement behavior, it appears that the law enforcement community has adopted a policy of containment. Although effort is sometimes expended to seek out private marihuana use, the trend is undoubtedly to invoke the marihuana possession laws only when the behavior (possession) comes out in the open. We were told by police officials in some cities, for example, that arrests are made only when marihuana use is flaunted in public.

(Marihuana, 1972a:112)

While "overlegislation" of "victimless crimes" may lead to disrespect for laws in general (see Schur, 1969a), the literature focuses on the drug laws specific to marihuana. Perhaps this is because marihuana may be considered the adopted drug of the decade among "respectable" persons. In any event, the marihuana laws are the target of discontent and disrespect for many youths and adults (Kadish, 1967; Packer, 1968; Kaplan, 1970; Clausen, 1971). Part of this attitude may be traced to the official scare stories about marihuana versus the experience of the user (Brecher, 1972:497-498). Also college youths are said to be exercising their critical and analytical skills to conclude that marihuana use is not immoral but that the law itself is immoral (Linn, 1971).

11 Drug Abuse, Apprehension, Self-Concept and Subsequent Behavior

Given current attitudes toward the drug laws and their enforcement, what effect will apprehension most likely have on the adolescent's self-concept and subsequent behavior? Using Chambliss's (1967) approach to deterrent effects on various types of deviance, one could say that the drug user who has a high commitment to drug abuse as a "way of life" will not be deterred from subsequent use by apprehension. However, the casual experimenter with a low degree of commitment to abuse will most likely discontinue use as the result of apprehension. But, the compounding factor of apprehension lies with the success of the labeling process in placing the person outside the conventional society. If the label does not permit "re-entry" (Simmons, 1969; Payne, 1973) the "deviant" will be literally forced, and indeed prefer, to associate with other "deviants" (Freedman and Doob, 1968). In so doing, a pattern of secondary deviance (Lemert, 1951) is established and a commitment to drug abuse or other deviant behaviors might be adopted. In order to avoid the secondary deviance of successful labeling, re-entry or delabeling (see Trice and Roman, 1970) must occur.

The commitment of the heroin user is a commitment of physiological addiction as well as psychological factors. Therefore, the effect of apprehension (with treatment) on subsequent drug abuse behavior should only result in making the abuser more cautious about being caught again. The commitment of the marihuana user, on the other hand, is highly variable. It may be the firm commitment of "habituation" (Fort, 1970:324) or the minimal commitment of experimentation. The relationship between apprehension and subsequent behavior of the marihuana user, as noted, will vary considerably with commitment to use or to an ideology that encourages use.

The tie-in of commitment to drug abuse with attitudes toward drug laws is probably one of high commitment to drug abuse and a negative attitude toward the drug laws. Again, this seems to be the case particularly for marihuana. The variable patterns of drug law enforcement no doubt serve to increase the high commitment person's negative views of the drug laws.

In light of the current disrespect for the marihuana laws and presumably drug laws in general, apprehension for a drug law violation should have little or no impact on the adolescent's self-concept. Current attitudes toward the drug laws and the lack of uniform enforcement tend to aid the adolescent in seeing himself a "victim" of an unjust system. Such a view could act as a neutralizing device against threats to the self-concept. The various techniques of neutralization and insulation against the labeling process have been reviewed and will not be repeated. General feelings about the drug laws may simply be added to this listing of self-concept preservers.

Most of this discussion has been in terms of marihuana laws and marihuana users, since the literature emphasizes this drug for the issues under discussion. However, Gibbons (1965) gives some insight into the view of the heroin user or narcotic addict on these issues.

Although narcotic addicts recognize that drug use is defined as illegal and criminal in nature, they view themselves as a rather

special kind of criminal. They argue that narcotic use is not really a criminal act similar to most forms of crime. Instead, it is viewed as a relatively innocuous personal vice which should not be regarded as criminal in nature, in the same way the use of alcohol or tobacco is not an illegal act. Consequently, although addicts define themselves as "hypes" and addicts, they see themselves as the victims of a capricious and unjust legal system.

(Gibbons, 1965:124)

In sum, it would appear that drug abusers, when apprehended, view themselves as "victims" of society's criminal "justice" system. As such, the labeling process is unlikely to be effective except to alter the abuser's relationships with conventional society. Becoming an "outsider" may have some long-range implications for the self-concept which, empirically, are not clear at this time.

12 Concluding Remarks

This paper has reviewed the literature relevant to the effect of arrest and identification of an adolescent "addict" or "drug abuser" on his or her self-image and subsequent behavior. The most relevant approach to view this problem was the labeling perspective. The labeling perspective looks at societal reaction to behavior it specifies as "deviant" and the impact of this definition on the person so labeled. The typical labeling approach may be seen as the ascription of a negative status "deviant" or "criminal" by official representatives of society. Supposedly societal reaction socializes the labelee to fulfill the role expectations of the status "deviant." The symbolic interactionist position from which labeling is derived, notes that the self-concept is forged in interaction with others. Therefore, the labeled "deviant" is thought to assume a negative self-concept commensurate with his deviant status.

This perspective tends to overlook the effects of labeling by informal groups of significant others as well as self-labeling which could well insulate the person from the effects of official or formal labeling. Furthermore, the labeling process works in a positive direction as well. Indeed, official labelers may well provide an adolescent with a positive label in his referent peer group rather than with the intended negative label whose referent is the larger conventional society.

Many factors serve to neutralize the labeling process. Some of these factors are socialization to deviant norms, deviant reference groups, various "techniques of neutralization, the giving of "accounts," negotiating reality, and the support of significant others. As the labeling process is neutralized one might expect little or no significant changes to occur in self-concept or behavior.

Two empirical studies were reviewed. One explored the impact of apprehension for delinquent behavior on subsequent delinquent behavior and the other explored the relationships between perception of self as delinquent, self-esteem, and official apprehension. Subsequent delinquent behavior was found to be increased by apprehension. One explanation is that the labeling process is working; a second possibility is that the delinquent peer group, rather than apprehension, may have had the effect of producing increased delinquent behavior. The perception of self as delinquent was found to be weakly related to official apprehension (positive correlation) and to self-esteem (negative correlation), while self-esteem was found to be unrelated to apprehension. The reported weak effect of official labeling on the perception of self as delinquent was lessened by parental and peer support. The self-esteem of those who accepted the delinquent label, as well as those who were insulated against it, was essentially unaffected. In explaining the lack of relationship between self-esteem and official apprehension, various intervening neutralization techniques may have been invoked or perhaps significant others, in different ways, served to preserve self-esteem. The interpretation of these findings for the purpose of this review remains unclear.

Turning to drug abuse, it was noted that the literature deals primarily with addiction (usually heroin use) and with marihuana use. The state of the self-concept prior to the use of a drug was explored. The onset of heroin use was frequently noted to accompany a need to preserve a positive self-esteem which was under attack. In some cases, marihuana and other drugs are said to be employed to narcotize against temporary dif-

ficulties such as a transient lowering of self-esteem. Evidence of the effects of apprehension for drug abuse on the self-concept could only be implied from the information available. Heroin users, to the extent they were co-opted by society in their treatment programs, may well come to view themselves as true "deviants" and thereby lower their self-esteem. Those using marihuana as part of the "hang-loose" ethic and symbolizing their discontent with various societal laws are unlikely to be convinced of anything but the rightness of their cause upon apprehension. Given the sporadic enforcement policies and the proportionately small number of apprehensions for marihuana use, the apprehended user is also likely to feel a strong sense of unfairness and injustice. In sum, the marihuana user committed to an ethic or ideology which views drug abuse positively should be unaffected by apprehension. The one-time or experimental user, however, may experience a loss in self-esteem as the result of apprehension. He typically has far less insulating or neutralizing capability than the more regular user.

How apprehension for a drug law violation impacts on adolescent psychological development cannot be answered directly by the available literature. There is a need to explore this issue in a careful and systematic fashion. Self-concept ideally should be measured prior to the onset of drug abuse, during the abuse phase, and prior to apprehension. Self-concept should be measured again after apprehension, along with some measure of post apprehension drug abuse. All the foregoing measures also should be taken from appropriate control groups. Additional variables such as those explored in this paper would need to be included to aid in assessing the impact, if any, of the labeling process.

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